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UNCLAS BUDAPEST 000307

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR FRONT OFFICE, EUR/NCE, AND EUR/SCE;  
PLEASE PASS TO NSC FOR ADAM STERLING

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL KO HU

SUBJECT: HUNGARY RECOGNIZES KOSOVO

REF: BUDAPEST 267 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) In a statement released March 19 shortly following a joint declaration of intent with Croatia and Bulgaria, the Hungarian Foreign Ministry announced the GoH's decision to recognize Kosovo.

¶2. (SBU) The statement:

Recognizes that moving forward was necessary for lasting stability and development in the region;

Refers to Kosovo recognition as a *sui generis* case rather than an international precedent;

Reaffirms the importance of full implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan and the GoH's commitment to supporting Serbia's progress on the path toward Euro-Atlantic integration;

Relates Hungary's participation in the International Steering Group and its continuing contributions to IC efforts on the ground.

¶3. (SBU) We understand from senior GoH sources that President Solyom's formal decision to establish diplomatic relations with Kosovo (required by Hungarian law) is expected within days.

¶4. (SBU) Initial reaction has been muted, with some commentators questioning Hungary's delay in recognizing Kosovo and others speculating that the decision was a gesture toward the USG in the aftermath of Hungary's commitment to South Stream. With the recent departure of the Serbian Ambassador from Budapest, we now expect a delay in the dispatch of his successor in light of the GoH's decision.

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